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PRESS RELEASE

Foreign Minister Wirajuda visits Washington D.C. to promote US-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, visited Washington D.C. on June 8-9, 2009 with the main agenda to hold a working visit with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton aimed to expand and deepen the bilateral relations between Indonesia and the United States towards a Comprehensive Partnership. During the visit, Minister Wirajuda also met with other high ranking officials including Senator John Kerry, Senator Richard Lugar, Senator James Webb, National Security Advisor Mr. James Jones, and the Director for National Intelligence Mr. Dennis Blair.

The meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was a continuation of the dialogue that was initiated during her visit to Indonesia last February. In the meeting held at the Department of State, the two top diplomats discussed various bilateral and international issues and reaffirmed their commitment to continue working on building a Comprehensive Partnership between the United States and Indonesia based on mutual respect and mutual interest. It is an important step to strengthen and elevate bilateral relations and cooperation in various areas covering political and security, economic and development, socio-cultural and education, including people to people exchange.

In the area of education, Secretary Clinton announced that the United States promised US\$ 10 million in FY 2009 to fund higher education programs in Indonesia, including projects for english language teaching and encouraging US-Indonesia educational linkages. Secretary Clinton also affirmed the U.S. intention to work together with Indonesia in developing interfaith dialogues and stands to support Indonesia in promoting the values of democracy in the region through Bali Democracy Forum that was initiated by Indonesia in 2008.

On regional issues, the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN for the regional stability and prosperity. They also welcomed the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter and applauded the inclusion of respect for human rights and good governance and the creation of a human rights body. On Myanmar, they again called for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi as a necessary step for national reconciliation. They both agreed that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was a grave threat to global peace and reaffirmed their shared commitment to address the issue.

During the meeting with other high ranking officials, Minister Wirajuda also discussed important steps in building this Comprehensive Partnership through a concerted effort by stakeholders in the U.S. and Indonesia in order to strengthen and broaden bilateral cooperation in various areas of mutual interest.

During his visit to Washington D.C., the Foreign Minister was also invited to speak about the US-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership on June 8, 2009 at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In the speaking engagement, the Foreign Minister welcomes the speech of President Obama in Cairo, Egypt, inviting muslim from around the world to a partnership with the American people to address the critical issues affecting the relations between Muslim world and the West.

The Foreign Minister also mentioned that the message is not new to Indonesia, after all the call for democracy, respect for human rights, including the rights of women, and promoting Islam that goes hand in hand with democracy has been among the foundation of Indonesian society. Indonesia as the country with the largest muslim population in the world, and being the third largest democracy in the world, stands ready to support efforts that will bridge that gap between the two worlds. The Minister mentioned that last April Indonesia held its parliamentary election that were peaceful, free and democratic. Early this coming July, again Indonesia will hold its direct presidential election for only the second time in its history. With the positive development in Indonesia's democratic and economic spheres brought about by political and judicial reforms, Indonesia has been involved in bridge-building efforts in all directions. And in this great endeavor Indonesia intends to partner with the United States.

Washington, D.C., June 9, 2009
